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FLAX



Harvesting

Flax can be harvested by straight combining when 90% of the boll are brown or by swathing then threshing with a combine. Straight combining is preferred but swathing or desiccation is becoming increasingly popular especially if weeds are present or the crop is maturing uneven.

Flax is considered to be fully mature to swath when 75% of the bolls have turned brown. After swathing, harvest the crop when moisture levels reach between 8 and 9%. Frost damage can occur with temperature between 23 and 27*. Temperature at this level results in lower test weight and black seeds which will result in a grade reduction.

Harvesting or swathing flax requires sharp cutting knives and knife guards. If the knives are dull accumulation of immature flax will occur under the knife causing breakage of the knife and stripping of the plants leaving much of the seed in the field.

Chemical Desiccation may be used to accelerate drying of the flax crop and weeds if present. The timing of the desiccation is when 75% of the bolls have turned brown. (Same as swathing). Harvesting should take place as soon as possible after the flax has dried, to avoid capsule loss and weathering of the seed.

Combine Settings

Cylinder or rotor clearance	_____	Closed or tight
Cylinder or rotor speed	_____	1100 rpm—very similar to wheat
Top chaffer	_____	Very similar to wheat
Bottom sieve	_____	1/4 to 3/8 open
Air	_____	Mid-range (if scale is 0-10, use 5 to start)

I have found that the combine book settings are very good for harvesting flax. Many times the book settings for crops are not close enough to give you a clean sample. Most of the troubles we have encountered with harvesting flax have centered around the cutting bar area. Harvesting flax requires sharp knives and knife guards.

Harvest samples of flax should be clean and pleasant to the eye. Flax can be cleaned nicely!! Do not hesitate to give us a call if additional help is necessary.



This bulletin serves as a guideline for production. Conditions may vary in individual fields. Good agronomic practices should always be followed by the grower to ensure the maximum potential.

(Best internet source of information <http://www.flaxcouncil>)